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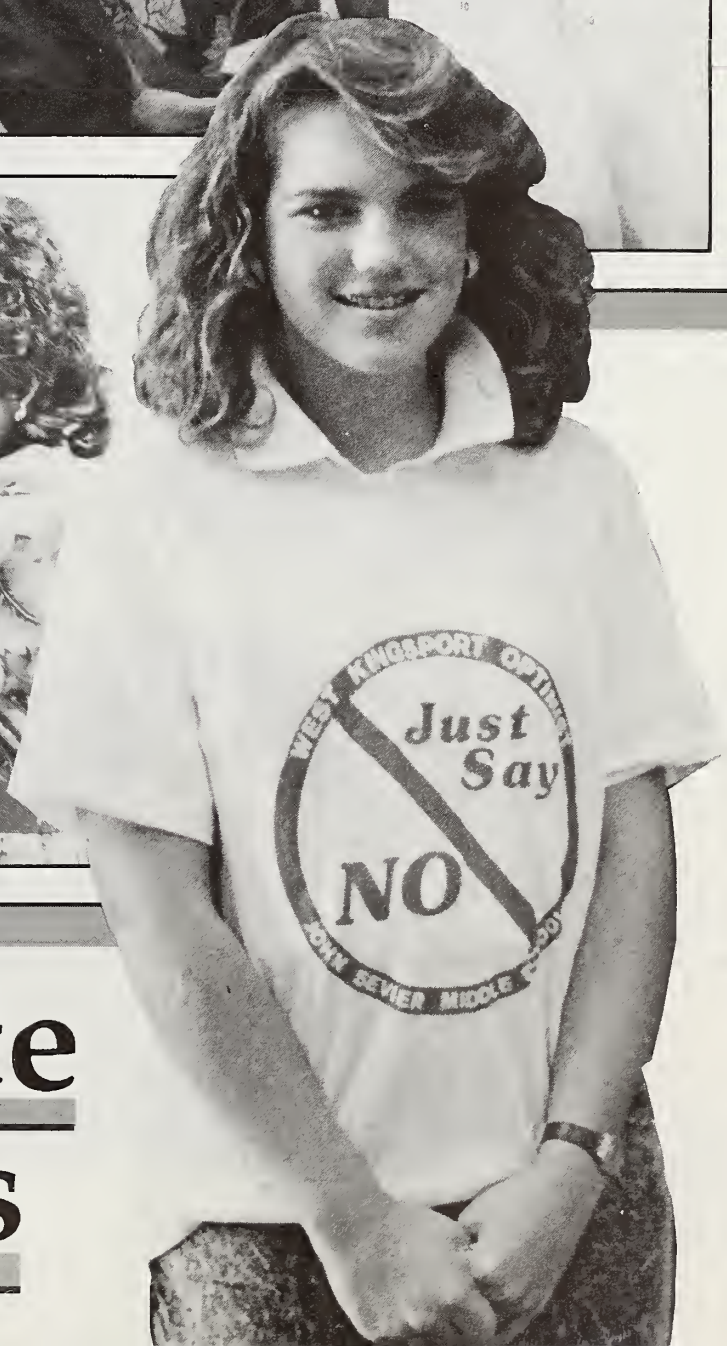
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Food & Nutrition

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Fall 1988 Volume 18 Number 4



Public-Private Partnerships

Creative Partnerships Continue To Grow...

If one person can make a difference, imagine the potential of 90 million. That's the number of Americans—almost half the adult population—who volunteered their services to improve their communities and help those in need last year.

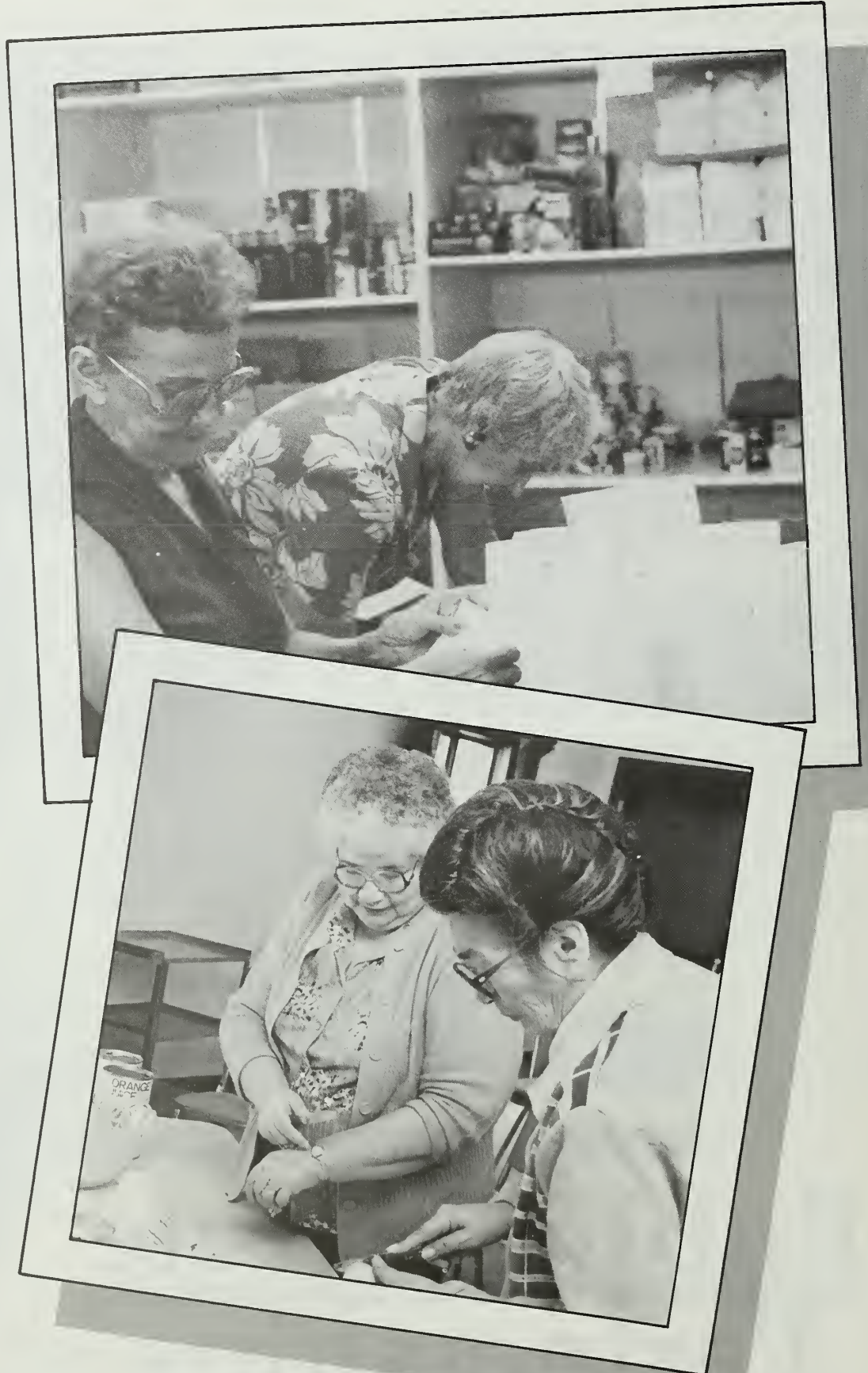
As early as 1981, President Reagan took steps to draw on this vast resource of people power through the formation of a Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives. Today, a permanent body, the Presidential Board of Advisors on Private Sector Initiatives, continues to promote both human and financial contributions.

Recognizing that neither government nor the private sector alone can meet individual and community needs completely, and that each has a unique and essential role to play, the board fosters public and private cooperation. It also helps focus national attention on those initiatives that can serve as models.

Among the volunteer activities honored this year by Presidential citation were the following groups and individuals whose work supplements federal food assistance programs:

- LTV Corporation employees in Dallas, Texas, collected 384,440 pounds of food for the North Texas Food Bank, the largest food drive in the nation.
- Kmart employees in Troy, Michigan, participated in providing Thanksgiving food baskets and children's shopping trips at Christmas for more than 40,000 needy families and children.
- The Second Harvest National Food Bank Network in Chicago distributed millions of pounds of food to more than 38,000 local charitable agencies.

Across the country, volunteers are helping get food to needy people through food banks and other community projects that distribute privately donated food as well as food from USDA.





More and more children are saying no to drugs, thanks to a nationwide campaign chaired by First Lady Nancy Reagan and supported by many local groups.



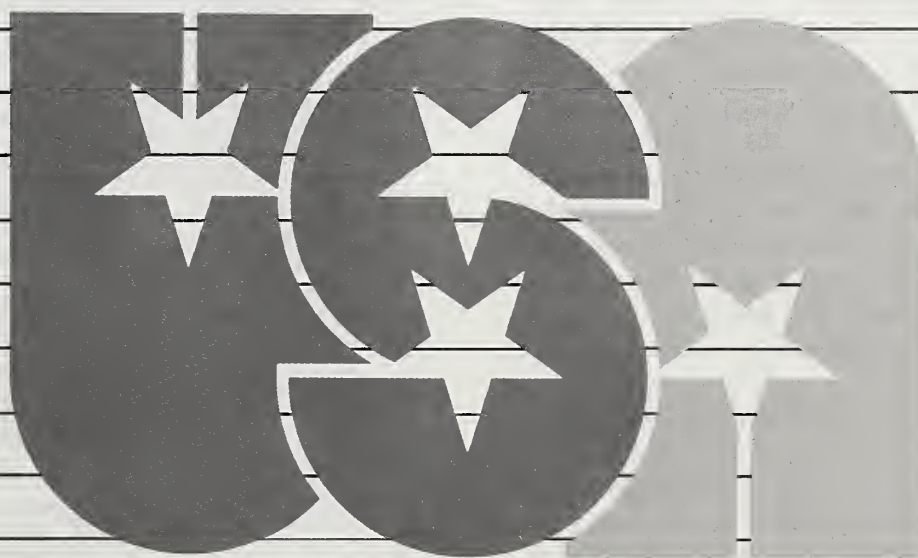
- Ethel Williams, a retired teacher in Paterson, New Jersey, operated a food pantry out of her home.

These are just a few examples of creative private responses to problems of hunger and poverty.

The White House Private Sector Initiative staff also provides leadership in specific nationwide projects. Food program employees at all levels—federal, state and local—have participated in making these initiatives a success. For example:

- School lunch directors and staff, as individuals and through their national professional organization, are cooperating actively with First Lady Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" to drugs campaign.

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Symbol of the President's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives

Schools and private industry have played a special role in the "Just Say No" effort. Some dairy companies have printed anti-drug messages on milk cartons used in school lunchrooms.

The American School Food Service Association is sponsoring poster and essay contests for school children on how to say no to drugs. Cafeteria milk cartons, thanks to suppliers, carry the same message.

- In yearly government-wide Care and Share drives, USDA employees, along with other government and private sector groups and individuals, have contributed canned and packaged food, and clothing for distribution to the needy. Last year alone, more than \$2.5 million was donated through approximately 800 Operation Care and Share projects, and almost 100 tons of food was contributed to feeding programs.

- Partnerships in Education, the umbrella program for private sector initiatives to improve our education system, has resulted in a wide variety of partnerships between schools and their communities. USDA has "adopted" Van Ness Elementary School, located in a low-income area of Washington, D.C. Agency volunteers helped set up a computer program, and regularly provide tutoring in academic subjects and special skills.

In the pages that follow, we highlight volunteer contributions that strengthen the mission and complement the performance of several of our food assistance programs.

For example, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which has distributed more than 5 billion pounds of surplus food to needy households throughout the nation, relies heavily on local volunteers. In 1986, an estimated 73 percent of the labor hours used in distributing TEFAP commodities were donated, at a cost-saving value of approximately \$50 million.

These and countless other successful partnerships show the direct and effective role that private citizens play in solving public problems. They exemplify the American tradition of voluntarism.

article by Wini Scheffler



A Bridge For Children: Special Staff Reach Out To Abused Children

Dear Sandy
Can we come back?
Sandy I miss all of you
and when I come back
can I give you a big
hug and I hope I can
come back soon.
Can I come back next
week?
Love John
(age 10)



Sandy Meyer is director and founder of "A Bridge for the Children," much more than a summer camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia.

A Bridge for the Children is a private, nonprofit program for abused and exploited children who now live in foster and children's homes. All of the funding is from private sources, except for the USDA commodities and funds that the camp receives from the Summer Food Service Program for Children.

A Bridge for the Children and its parent foundation, the Sandy Meyer Center, Inc., sprang from the brutal past of their founder. Sandy Meyer was abused by both her mother and father until the age of 14. Out of Meyer's search to quiet her own pain came a lifetime commitment to helping others.

From Colorado to a Virginia farm

Meyer found that working with children who had had the same kinds of

Sandy Meyer (right) is proud of the care children receive at her camp. She is pictured here with daughter-in-law Cindy and William Robertson of USDA.

experiences was a cleansing experience for her. In Colorado, Meyer had developed a lucrative counseling practice and a national lecture tour. Still not satisfied and looking for ways to be of more help, she moved to a 446-acre Virginia farm, and in the fall of 1985 established the Sandy Meyer Center for Human Advancement, Inc.

With help from two permanent and dedicated staff members, A Bridge for the Children was born. Cindy Meyer, who is married to Sandy Meyer's son Keith, is one of those staff members.

"Sandy wanted to establish a place where she could help children free of charge," Cindy Meyer says. "The office is staffed by five full-time adult volunteers, all of whom gave up careers to

make an initial 3-year commitment to the work done for the children."

The camp has grown from 30 children in 1986 to 49 in 1988. They come from Virginia and as far away as Wisconsin, Maryland, Michigan, Colorado, California, Texas, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C.

"Everything is free to the children," explains Cindy Meyer. "Transportation, air fare where needed, food, supplies, tents, recreational supplies." With donated clothing from such varied sources as local churches and clothing designers in California, children get clothes if they need them.

USDA helps assure well-balanced meals

Serving well-balanced meals is one way in which A Bridge for the Children helps repair children's lives.

"Food really makes a difference to children," says Cindy Meyer. "The little faces light up when they eat. One of our goals is to help the kids become more aware of nutrition."

The Summer Food Service Program furthers this goal. "USDA helped us put together menus and in general helps us make sure we meet nutritional guidelines for the children," says Cindy Meyer, who handles the administration of the summer food program. When she first received all the paperwork, she says, she was overwhelmed.

"I said there was no way I can do this. But the people have been so supportive and helpful that they helped me through it," she says.

A Bridge for the Children is a program for a lifetime. It bridges the gap between the child and what social service agencies provide. Children, age 10 to 17, come here to learn practical skills for dealing with their problems in nonviolent ways.

The children's needs are great. Cindy Meyer says, "There are stories that would break your heart." They are brutal, horrible stories, with lives that are in urgent need of mending.

The camp runs for a total of 6 weeks in the summer. The first 3 weeks, junior counselors—children age 13 and up—learn their roles at camp. This past summer there were 12 junior counselors, 11 with histories of abuse. The second 3 weeks, the younger children come.

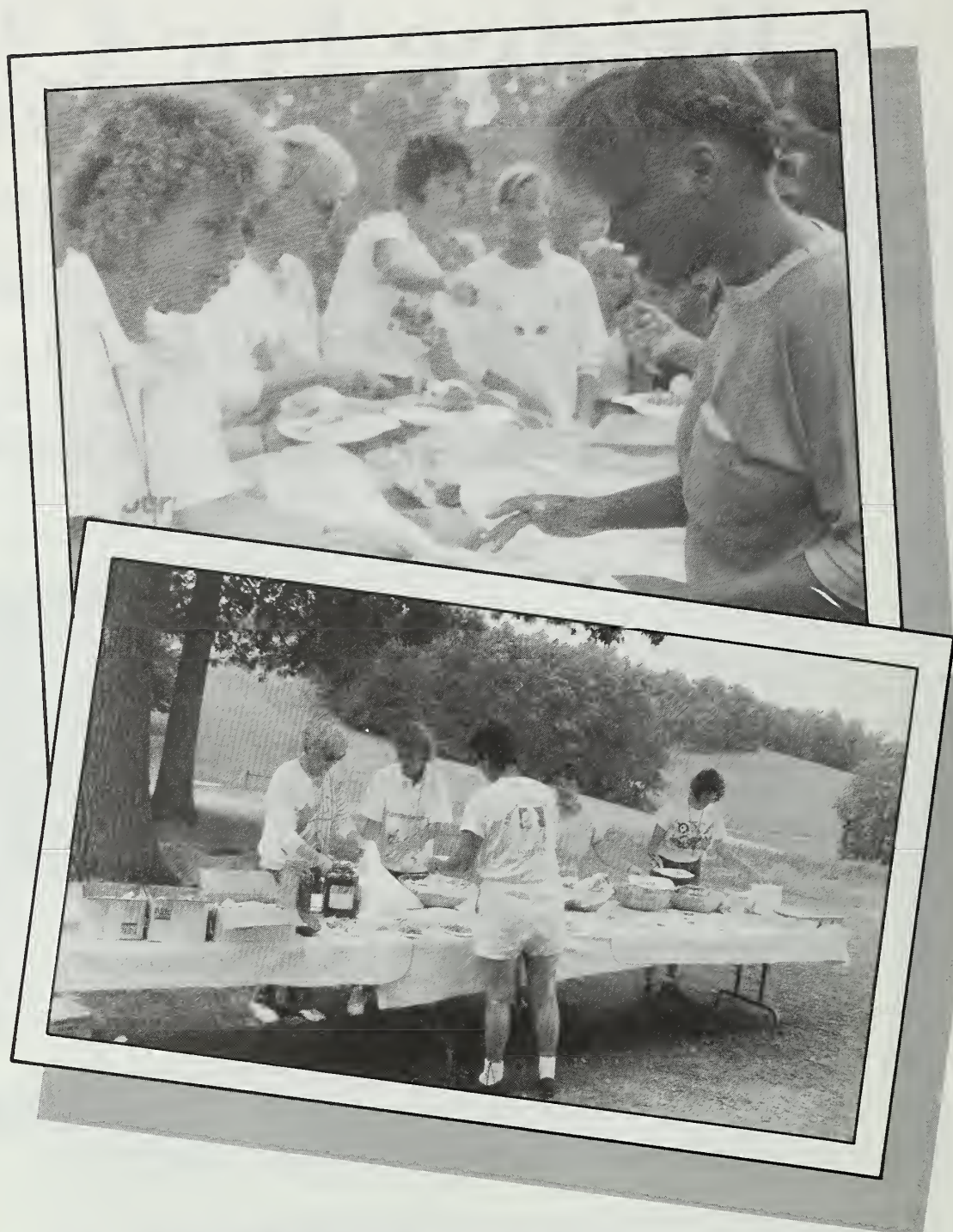
Diana Wiley, vice president for operations, says, "This is the first time these children can talk about their feelings. If a child is hurt and taken into a foster home, they feel inside they're still not OK. The hurt doesn't get fixed.

"If they come to something that is fun, where they can go fishing, swimming, horseback riding, have a good time and learn that there are other children with the same kind of problems, they start the healing process."

Children share painful stories

In addition to sports, arts and crafts, and other recreation, campers gather daily for self-discovery workshops, carefully guided by Sandy Meyer. It is here where the children share with each other their painful experiences of rape and beating, and later being removed from or abandoned by their families.

Contact with these children continues long after summer is over. The chil-



Above and opposite page: Staff serve lunch to the children on the camp's beautiful grounds. The camp receives

help for meals through USDA's Summer Food Service Program for Children.

dren come back during the year for visits. "We have staff year-round so campers can feel that this is their home," she says. "In most instances, this is the only stable environment they will know."

Staff members arrange for farm visits about every 8 weeks. Once a child is a camper, he or she is guaranteed a place at the camp until age 18, and will receive support throughout their adult years.

Cindy Meyer says that statistically, children will repeat the abuse they receive. "Our goal is to end that—give caring, guidance, and education. We want them to be care givers, not abuse repeaters."

Seek support in creative ways

A Bridge for the Children seeks funding and support in creative ways. They ask people before camp to sponsor a child. They reach out to the local community with fundraising efforts like a golf marathon where golfers, including Sandy Meyer's son Keith, played for 12 hours, nonstop. (Keith Meyer is children's program advisor, working toward his doctorate in clinical psychology, and plans to carry on in his mother's footsteps.)

They ask for donations of all sorts, and receive them—from 35 cases of Coca-Cola for the golf marathon, to a pair of Arabian horses, to a promo-

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tional documentary filmed by the Hollywood director of the movie "The Witches of Eastwick."

The counselors all have come from Meyer's adult workshops, and are all volunteers. Wiley says they give up 3 to 6 weeks of their summer vacations, fly or drive from California, Colorado, Michigan and Ohio at their own expense, and are professionals in their own right.

Sandy Meyer's goal is to see hundreds of similar programs spring up across the country. The foundation is setting up a pilot program for use by other social service organizations.

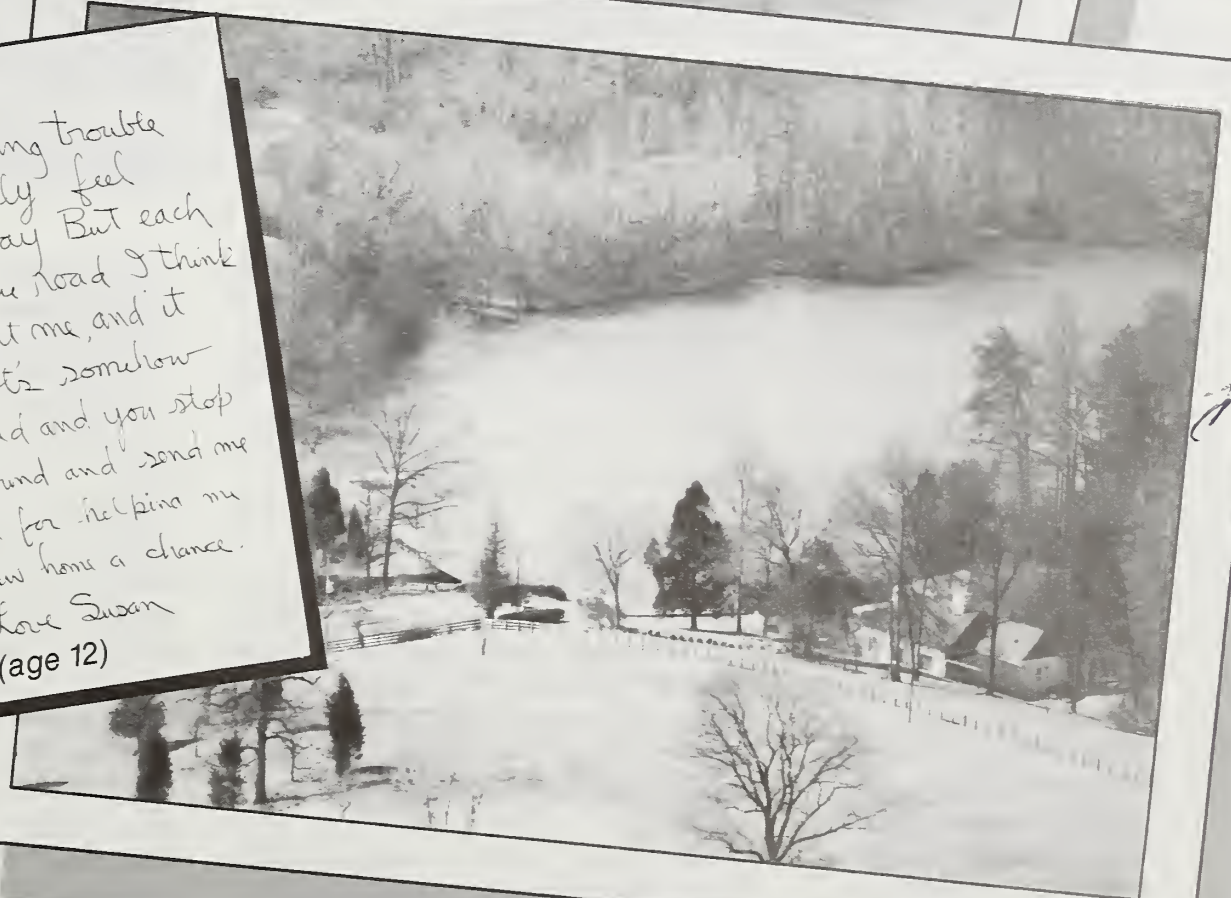
A Bridge for the Children and the Sandy Meyer Center, Inc. are anxious to share information on their programs, and to help more of the 2 million children who are reported to have been abused each year. Contact them at:

The Sandy Meyer Center, Inc.
A Bridge for the Children
P.O. Box 1067
Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151
Telephone: (703) 483-4812

*article and photos
by Linda Feldman*



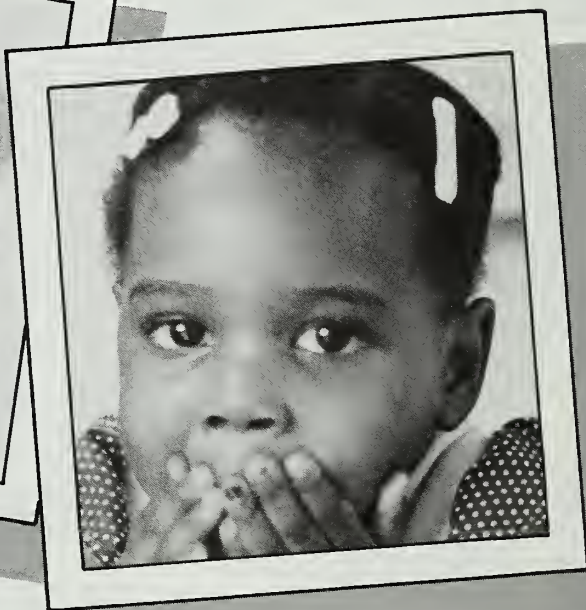
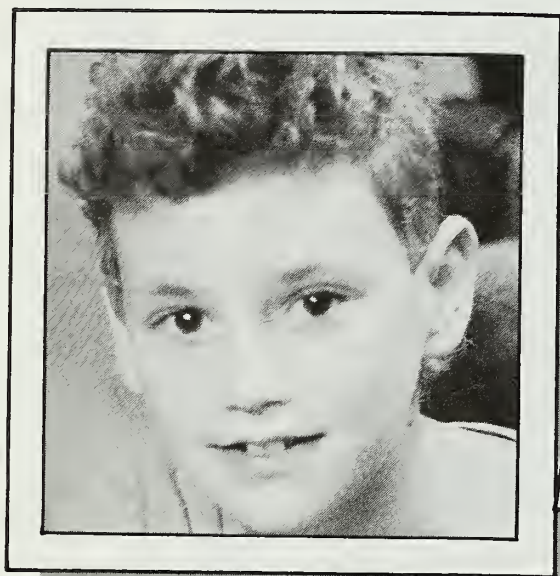
Dear Sandy
I have been having trouble lately, and I really feel like running away. But each time I start up the road I think of what you taught me, and it holds me back. It's somehow like you are a shield and you stop and turn me around and send me back. Thank you for helping me try to give my new home a chance.
Love Susan
(age 12)



A Bridge for the Children is located on a 446-acre farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Children come here from as far away as California.

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St. Benedict's Offers Food, Solace, And Stability



Outside in the scorching heat of the summer sun, 10 or 15 children are playing. The children are neatly dressed; some are toddlers, a few teens.

Inside the air-conditioned parish house, two or three mothers are still finishing their lunches—pieces of baked chicken and thick, crusty bread left on their plates. A baby sleeps restlessly in a crib by one wall.

The scene could be a typical church gathering, a friendly meal with a sense of caring and community.

Yet something is different. Perhaps it is the stress that shows on the mothers' faces. Perhaps it is the urgency in their voices. These women are homeless. They are staying at welfare motels, and the parish house offers them a weekly respite, a meal and a place for their kids to play.

The parish house belongs to the

community of St. Benedict's, a Catholic parish in affluent Holmdel, New Jersey, a bedroom community to New York and Philadelphia. Its sprawling, almost rural setting boasts well-kept lawns and a number of low buildings separated by a large parking lot.

Seeing clear need to help homeless

Sister Dorothy, a social worker, is head of the social ministry office. One day, not far from St. Benedict's, she watched as a pregnant mother and her three young children crossed a four-lane divided road in the middle of traffic.

The mother had food stamps, Sister Dorothy later found out, and all she saw was the food store across the street, not the danger to herself or children crossing the street. "It struck me, the aloneness and the emotion," says

Sister Dorothy. She says she knew then that something had to be done.

The family was among the estimated 28,000 homeless in New Jersey. They were living in temporary quarters in one of three motels near St. Benedict's.

Shortly after, Sister Dorothy helped set up a food pantry for the homeless people in these motels. From there, she opened the parish doors to the homeless families every Tuesday, for a hot meal, a place to gather and talk, for some stability for the children who have no place to call home.

Parishioners of all ages help with this effort. Eighth-grade students, as part of their social ministry work, babysit the children from the motels on Tuesdays. Volunteers from the parish, along with the homeless moms, help cook meals.

Although the parish gets most of its food from a nearby food pantry at 12

Food and Nutrition



These young children, with their mothers and teenage sisters, are among the homeless people who come to St. Benedict's for hot meals, companionship, and help with their special problems.

cents a pound, parishioners make up the difference, both in food and monetary donations. They also offer clothing and diapers. "The parishioners are very generous," says Sister Dorothy.

In addition, the parish helps send some of the homeless children to Katari Day Camp, a day camp for welfare children where Sister Dorothy worked for 20 years. Katari gets help from many sources, including USDA's Summer Food Service Program.

Homeless mother finds home for WIC

Nancy, a single mother, is one of the homeless who came to St. Benedict's. She and 3½-year-old daughter Allison had been without a permanent residence since 1984 when they recently found a house to share.

Nancy is tenacious, intelligent, and driven. Eager to help others facing diffi-

cult times, she and her new housemate, Mary, formed a homeless action team that, among other things, has brought USDA's WIC program to St. Benedict's one Tuesday afternoon a month.

Nancy, who started on WIC in 1984 with her daughter, had tried calling various agencies to get emergency milk for the babies of some of the families she knew. She ended up talking to MCOSS, the nonprofit health and social services agency that administers WIC in Monmouth County, and found people eager to help.

As a first step, MCOSS office manager Jackie Snow arranged for a formula company to deliver infant formula, free of charge, to St. Benedict's. Then, in March of this year, with Nancy's and Sister Dorothy's help, Snow arranged to begin a once-a-month WIC clinic at St. Benedict's for the homeless families

living in the three Holmdel motels.

To reach mothers and children in need of help, Nancy and Mary conduct their own outreach program, knocking on doors at the three welfare motels. The homeless action team has bought a van which they use to bring families to St. Benedict's, and to take them shopping to use their WIC vouchers and to other appointments. They arrange for speakers and other activities, and even have fundraisers to pay for these events.

One of the people who works with the WIC program at St. Benedict's is nutritionist Jean Cox, who helps homeless families on WIC cope with their special nutritional problems. Some of the motels for the homeless have no refrigerators or air conditioning. In some, no hot plates or cooking facilities are allowed, or families have to borrow hot plate or stove from a neighbor.



Sister Dorothy (above) has helped bring a variety of services, including USDA's WIC program, to homeless women and children. This woman (below) and her baby are both WIC participants.

Helping families in many ways

In addition to WIC, MCOSS delivers a variety of social services to Monmouth and two neighboring counties in New Jersey. The private, nonprofit agency, which employs 800 people, has a special child health care grant, senior citizens grants, and grants dealing with boarding home issues. Their visiting nurses' association is the eighth largest in the country.

In July, MCOSS was given a regional award by the Mid-Atlantic Regional office of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for their work with the homeless.

Betty Sorrento is one of the boarding home nurses who works at St. Benedict's. She comments that the major problem she sees with homeless people is a chronic lack of continuity in their lives. "The basics are lacking,"

The nutrition lesson Cox gave to WIC families one Tuesday in June centered on healthy snacks. With limited kitchen facilities, she suggested snacking on cereals and cheese, crackers and bread; buying powdered or canned milk. If more than one person is on WIC in the family, she advised using only one voucher at a time. Some instant foods are OK, she told the group, but cautioned the families to read the

labels and watch prices.

The mothers and children asked many questions and had many basic concerns about preparing foods. The nutrition lesson was a time for even older siblings to learn. In particular, three or four junior high school age children, who hadn't been able to go to school for 2 months because of their homeless situation, were eager to hear what Cox had to say.



Sorrento says. "Health and medical care are not priorities. Often the kids end up last on the list of priorities."

Nancy agrees. "The family structure suffers, nutritional areas suffer," she says.

Through WIC and other services, St. Benedict's is helping homeless families with their special problems. Nancy, like other mothers, says she likes coming to St. Benedict's. "It's relaxed," she says, "and we see the same nurses and staff all the time. They understand our needs. WIC is wonderful. MCOSS is full of love."

For more information, contact:
MCOSS Foundation
Carol Deneck, WIC Program
141 Bodman Place
Redbank, New Jersey 07701
Telephone: (201) 747-1204

Sister Dorothy
Community of St. Benedict's
165 Bethany Road
Holmdel, New Jersey 07733

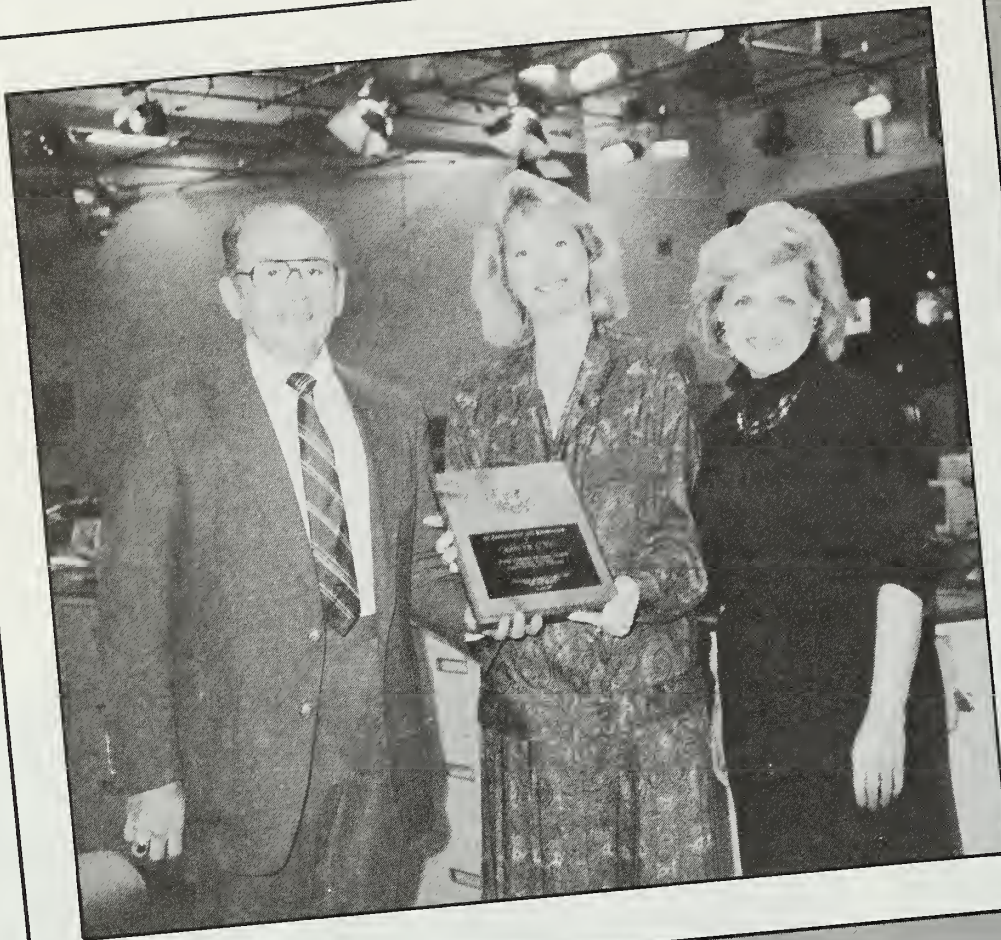
*article and photos
by Linda Feldman*

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Nutritionist Jean Cox (above right) is one of the people who works with the WIC program at St. Benedict's. Here she meets with a WIC mother to counsel her about her baby's nutritional needs.

The Late Cable N Nutrition For Food Partici



Virgil Conrad, administrator of FNS' Southeast Region, and FNS nutritionist Betty Wills (right) present an award to Cable News Network's Carolyn O'Neill, anchor for "Nutrition News."

Turner Broadcasting System's (TBS) Cable News Network has built an international reputation for the quality of its in-depth programming on a variety of topics. Portions of that programming which appeal to recipients of USDA's Food Stamp Program are now being put together in special videotapes for distribution by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

"Turner Educational Services is the licensing arm of Turner Broadcasting System," says Gary Rowe, head of TBS' educational marketing division. "Distributors—primarily publishers of educational materials—buy a license from us to use videotapes of our educational productions. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is the only non-paying distributor we have."

The relationship between USDA and TBS came about through the professional association of Betty Wills, a nutritionist with FNS' regional office in Atlanta, and Carolyn O'Neill, nutritionist and anchor for TBS' "Nutrition News" and "On The Menu."

Wills was searching for effective but inexpensive ways to provide nutrition education materials to local food stamp

offices in the Southeast. O'Neill, who has a knack for pinpointing issues in nutrition that are of interest to consumers, had accumulated a library of programs that had been aired on "Nutrition News" or "On The Menu." She had exactly the kind of nutrition education materials Wills was seeking, and Wills had a market (albeit a non-paying one) for extending the educational life of O'Neill's programs.

While both agreed this would be a worthwhile project on which to collaborate, they still needed the approval of TBS' management. Between O'Neill's persuasive presentation and TBS' interest in public service, the idea became a reality.

The relationship turned out to be even better than Wills had hoped. First, Rowe arranged for TBS to sign a distribution licensing contract with USDA, carrying the same rights and restrictions as those signed by TBS' commercial clients. For example, tapes prepared by TBS cannot be modified, edited, or reproduced without permission.

TBS then offered to edit materials from its film library into 30- to 35-minute

tapes featuring topics that would appeal to food stamp recipients.

Tapes produced every few months

The videotapes consist of 15 different nutrition education segments (about 2 minutes each) interspersed with 30-second educational messages that are relevant to food stamp recipients.

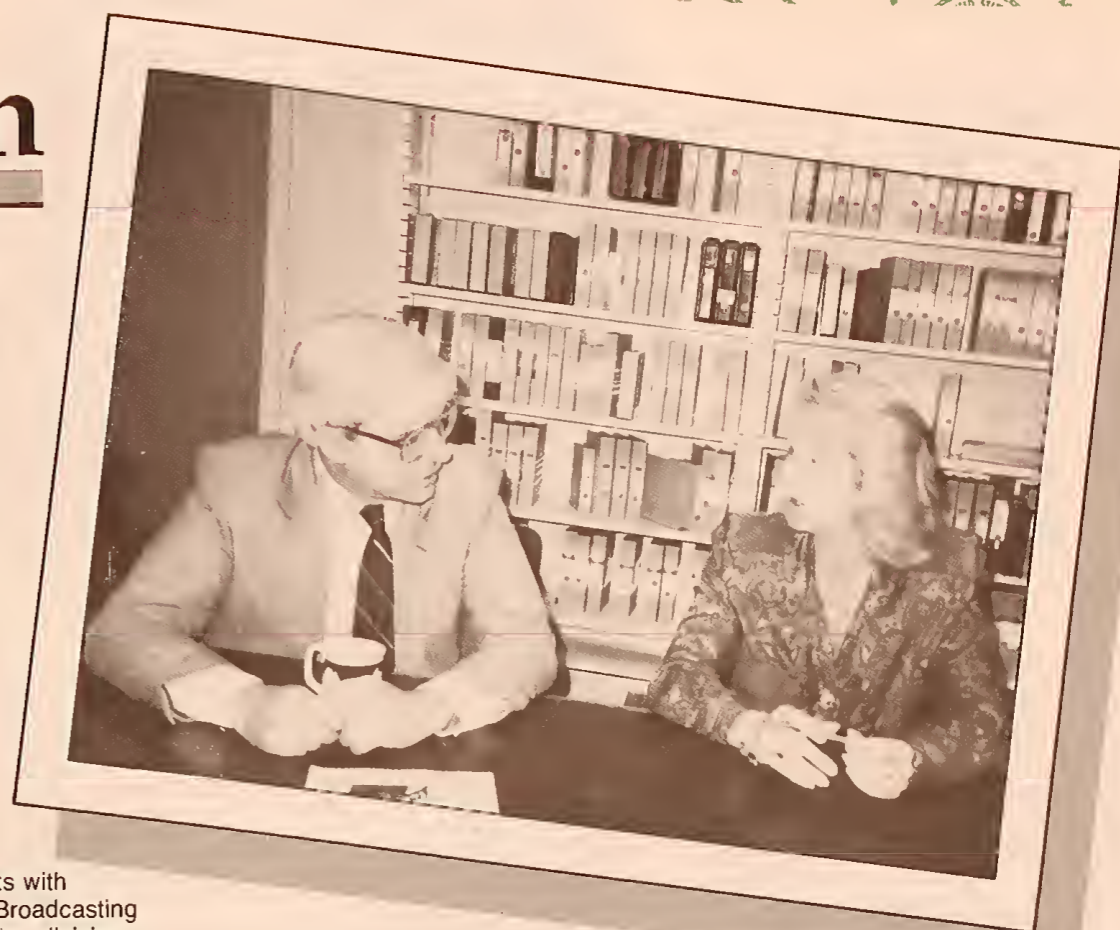
The messages include information about FNS' publication series, "Make Your Food Dollars Count," and also deal with topics related to food stamp eligibility and compliance, such as the importance of reporting changes in household income or residence to the food stamp office. New tapes are produced every 3 to 4 months.

Wills and O'Neill work together to select which segments of "Nutrition News" or "On the Menu" would be most pertinent to low-income families or would reinforce the national dietary guidelines. If a segment deals with expensive, exotic foods, it won't be used. If scenes are shot in situations that would be totally foreign to most recipients, those scenes are cut.



The Latest From Cable News... Nutrition Videos For Food Stamp Participants

Virgil Conrad, administrator of FNS' Southeast Region, and FNS nutritionist Betty Wills (right) present an award to Cable News Network's Carolyn O'Neill, anchor for "Nutrition News."



Here, O'Neill, who also anchors a program called "On The Menu," meets with Gary Rowe, head of Turner Broadcasting System's educational marketing division.

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After the videotape segments have been selected, Wills develops specific educational messages that help food stamp recipients understand how to comply with program regulations. For instance, one message may explain the difference between "income" and "earned income"; another message may explain what kind of changes need to be reported and when that report is required. In addition, Wills may suggest some graphics to complement the message.

TBS takes over from this point. The production staff pulls together the selected segments, edits out irrelevant or inappropriate material, prepares the educational messages, designs the accompanying graphics and prepares several masters of each finished videotape.

Once the masters are prepared, they're given to Wills, who develops packets of printed materials to accompany the tapes. The tapes and packets are sent to state food stamp agencies in the Southeast, where they are reproduced and sent to individual county food stamp offices. In addition, Wills sends a videotape to each of the other

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six FNS regional offices. They, in turn, duplicate the tapes and send them to each of their state food stamp agencies.

An effective way to deliver the message

"The advantages of using videotapes for educating food stamp recipients about nutrition and program regulations are numerous," Wills says. "First and foremost, local food stamp agencies, which are strapped by budgetary and staffing constraints, can now present timely nutrition and administrative information to recipients with a minimum of cost and staff time."

"Videotapes are an especially effective way to reach food stamp recipients who may have poor reading skills," Wills adds, "and recipients are more likely to watch and listen to network-produced videotapes than to other types of videos. The information being generated has more validity."

Wills has nothing but compliments for the way Rowe and O'Neill have worked with her on this project. "They are receptive to ideas we may have on topics that would be especially useful

to food stamp recipients," she says.

As an example, Wills says that when she mentioned wanting to address the specific needs of the elderly, O'Neill replied that she would do some segments on that topic the next time she was in the St. Petersburg, Florida, area.

Rowe says the service contract he signed with FNS will be renewed indefinitely as far as he is concerned. "We like to think the topics covered by our regular programming are relevant enough to be useful over an extended period of time. Carolyn and I plan to continue working with USDA on this project."

"In our information-saturated society, there's a continuous need to present information to the public in a creative way," he adds. "We're happy to share our efforts to meet this need with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service."

For more information, contact:
Public Information Staff
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
1100 Spring Street, N.W.-Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30367
Telephone: (404) 347-4259

article by Connie Crunkleton

Successful Teamwork Means Fresh Milk For Puerto Rico's Schools

After 40 years of drinking reconstituted nonfat dry milk with their school lunches, Puerto Rican children are getting fresh, fluid milk—and they, their parents, and their school lunchroom staff are glad of it.

The change is the result of an effort by Puerto Rico's Milk Industry Development Fund, a cooperative venture between the government and the milk producers to promote the island's milk industry. The fund, known as "El Fondo" in Puerto Rico, will provide coolers so that schools can keep fresh milk cool.

While fresh milk is routinely served by schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, school lunch regulations allow for the use of nonfat dry milk in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and some other off-shore programs when there is not a sufficient supply of fluid milk. For about 40 years, the milk industry in Puerto Rico did not produce a sufficient supply of fresh fluid milk.

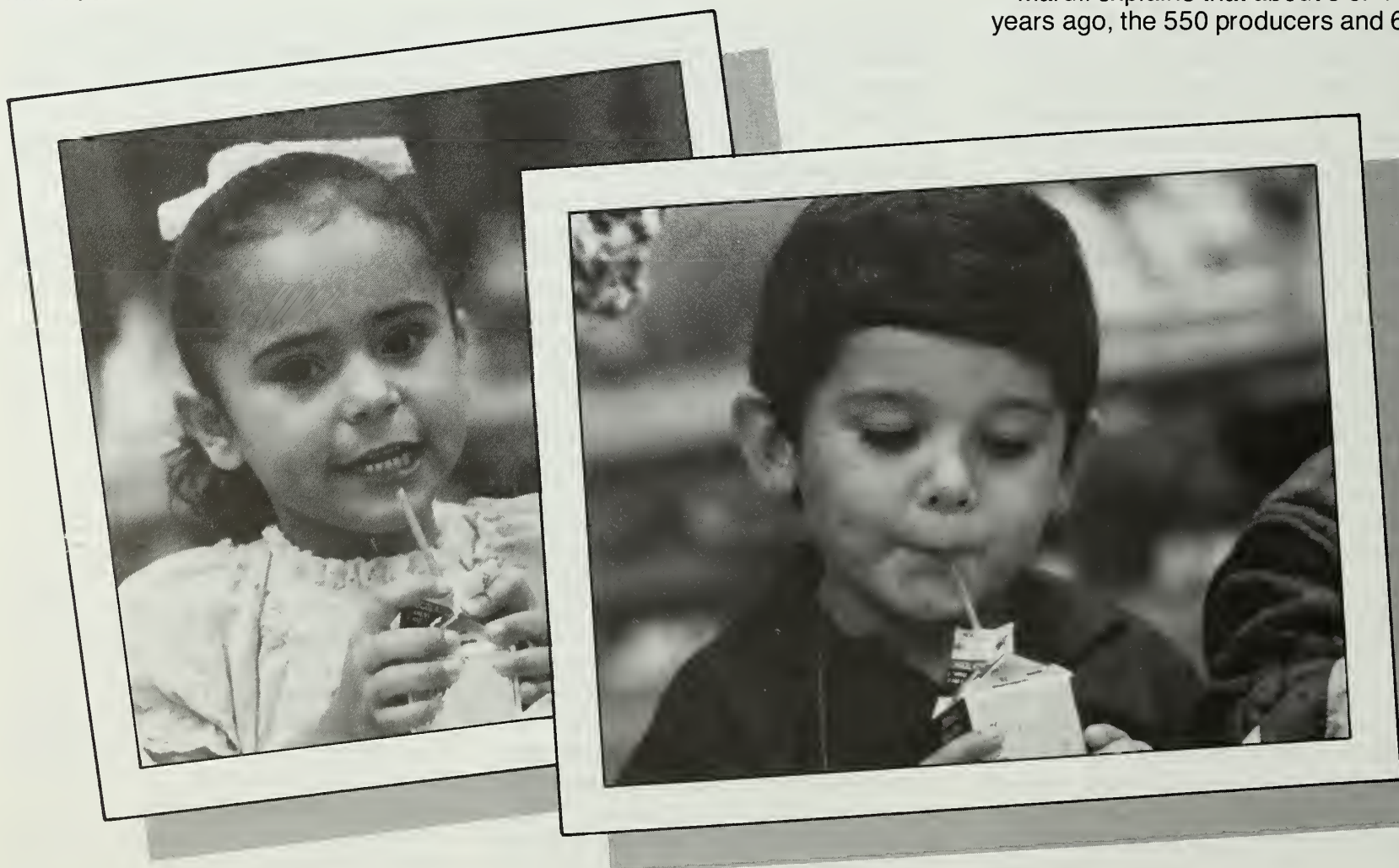
"Last year, when we began serving fresh milk to the school system in the lunch program," says Josep T. Marull,

executive director of the semi-public El Fondo, "we donated the coolers so school rooms could have enough refrigeration capacity."

According to Robert Freiler, director of special nutrition programs for the Food and Nutrition Service's Mid-Atlantic Region (MARO), the cooperative arrangement is noteworthy. "I know no better example of government and private sectors working together," he says.

A new boost for milk industry

Marull explains that about 3 or 4 years ago, the 550 producers and 6





processors on the island got together with government officials and decided to do something to boost the milk industry.

"With the help of the government, we have developed new economic measures, a self-regulated program, and more aggressive marketing strategies," he says. Increased quality and production will now allow marketing to not only the school lunch and breakfast programs, but also to military bases, to St. Thomas and St. Croix, and to airlines that land in San Juan.

USDA requires serving fluid milk as part of its meal patterns in all child nutrition programs, and for good reason. Dr. Bernard Brachfeld, MARO's nutri-

tion coordinator, notes that although the nutritional value of nonfat dry milk is the same as fresh fluid milk if it is reconstituted properly and vitamin D is added, the powdered milk is not of consistent quality. "All fluid milk is consistent. One scoop of powder may not be the same scoop of powder the second time around," Brachfeld says.

Powdered milk is not popular

In instances where powdered milk is served instead of fluid milk, the powder is reconstituted and served, but rarely to the satisfaction of the students. This was true in Puerto Rico. "Nonfat powder was not well accepted," says Awilda

Aponte, Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education. Jaime Rivera, director of FNS' Caribbean Area Office (CAO), agrees.

"Over the years," he says, "the school lunch program tried to make the milk more palatable by adding cinnamon, chocolate, even peanut butter flavoring. For those of us who went through the lunch program . . . I remember having to pinch my nose. I remember it as a white, chalky, diluted beverage."

In addition to the problem of taste, the process of reconstituting, says Aponte, was complicated. "It was quite a ceremony. People in the lunchrooms are really glad we are changing."

There was also a storage problem. The more than 6 million pounds of

powdered milk Puerto Rico used each year took up a lot of space.

"Over the years, parents, students, and lunch personnel asked us to make the change," Aponte says. But, she adds, there were definite problems in changing over: not enough available fresh milk, the additional cost of buying the milk instead of receiving the powdered milk as a donated government commodity, and lack of adequate refrigeration.

In 1985 the milk industry informed FNS that their production had increased to the point that they could supply enough milk for child nutrition programs, but the other obstacles Aponte listed still had to be overcome.

Refrigeration and delivery were key

Dr. Amadeo Frances, the governor's assistant for economic development, was called in to coordinate issues between the Department of Education, under which the school lunch program falls, and the Department of Agriculture.

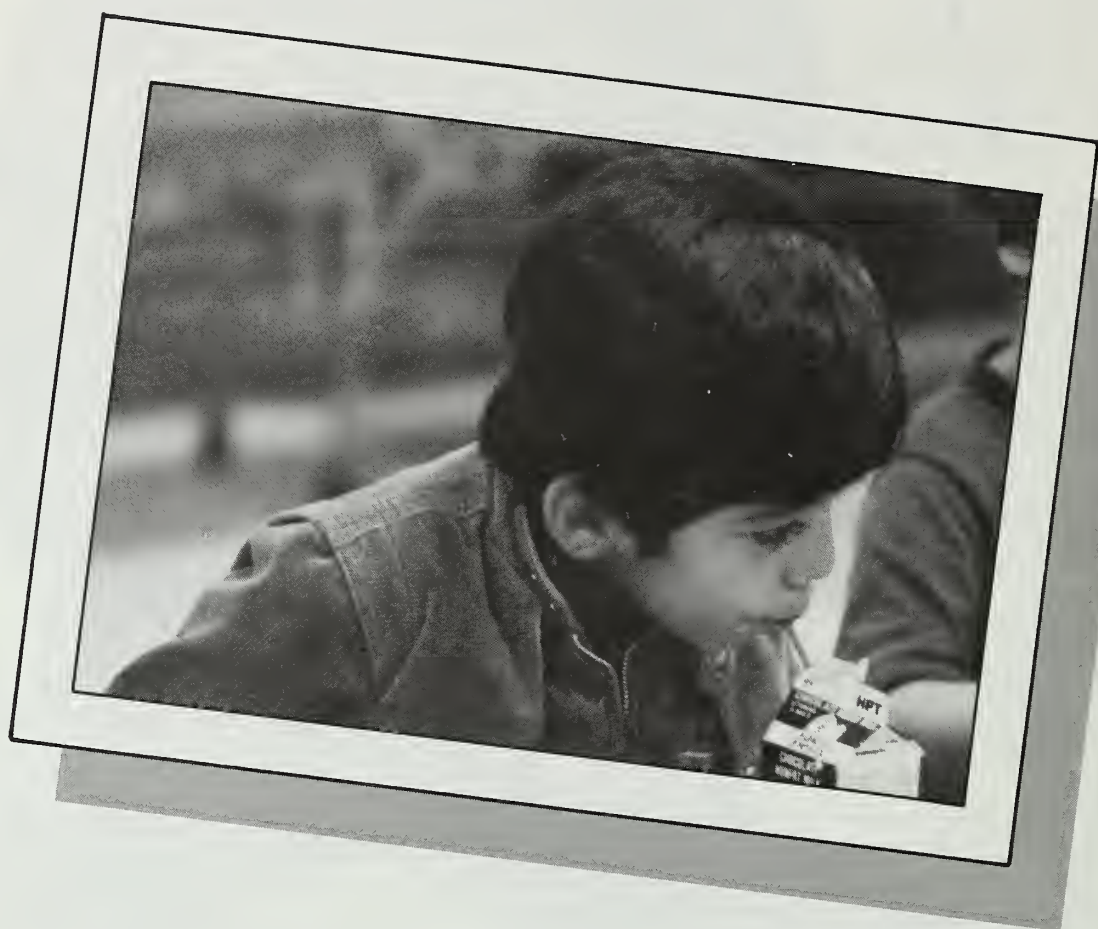
There was a shortage of refrigeration in the schools, and there was a problem with distribution because the milk industry couldn't deliver milk every day. Aponte explains that although the island is small, access is not always easy because of the terrain.

The milk distribution routes that had been in place for years had to be changed. That was up to the milk industry, which also had to train personnel in such new areas as delivering to rural areas and to schools.

The Department of Education had to worry about the actual facilities. Aponte says there were electrical and refrigeration problems to overcome. Most schools have one refrigerator for vegetables and other perishable items. There isn't enough room for milk.

After negotiations among Puerto Rico's departments of agriculture and education, the dairy industry, and FNS, a 3-year phase-in plan was established beginning in 1988. Puerto Rico has 2,749 schools and child care institutions that need to be brought into the plan. (Child care institutions currently fall under the school lunch program in Puerto Rico.) By the end of the first year, 1,428 schools should be receiving fluid milk.

The agreement with El Fondo was crucial in providing refrigeration for all schools. Although the Department of Education is supplying some schools with added refrigerators or coolers, El



Fondo is donating as many as 1,500 milk coolers at a cost of \$1.8 million.

Coolers help solve problems

According to El Fondo's Marull, the coolers can be put right in the cafeteria line. This saves having an extra worker who has to hand out the milk. More importantly, the coolers hold 780 half-pints each. This is enough to hold milk for 2 days, alleviating the problem of daily deliveries.

Five hundred coolers have already been delivered to schools. Marull says some of the coolers El Fondo will buy in the future will have smaller capacity to accommodate smaller schools.

Each cooler is essentially a 3-foot-high refrigerated box of galvanized steel, with stainless steel doors that swing down and lids that swing up. Marull says that in the 3 or 4 months before school let out he received 200 calls from schools who hadn't gotten added refrigeration, asking if they could have a cooler. "This," he says, "is a good indication of their acceptance."

And that is exactly the goal of the entire project, from the dairy producers' end. The coolers were donated with a clear goal in mind. "This is part of the painful process of marketing growth," says Marull.

The reward is that 500,000 students will learn to drink milk. Frances, the governor's assistant, concurs. "We are

seeing not just an immediate impact to our schools, but more important, we are developing a clientele. Kids weren't being turned on to milk. We hope this will increase milk consumption in years to come."

CAO director Rivera sees all of the negotiations and the final plan to phase in fluid milk as a long-term investment in Puerto Rico's future.

This is a clear example, says Marull, of cooperation between government and private industry. "We got together in this venture. Everyone needs to take part in this. The rewards are there."

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article by Linda Feldman

Iowa Volunteers Bring Food And Friendship

An 82-year-old woman opens the door of her fourth floor apartment in Des Moines, Iowa, with a smile and a warm welcome to her visitor. Unable to get out to do her own grocery shopping, and living on a fixed income, she and about 2,700 other elderly shut-ins in Polk County benefit from a volunteer delivery program organized by officials of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) there.

About 200 volunteers from various charitable organizations, plus individuals and groups such as Kiwanis, American Legion, and local churches make bimonthly deliveries of CSFP food packages to elderly recipients who are old, infirm, or physically unable to leave their homes. Of 4,700 Des Moines area residents who benefit from this USDA program, about 57 percent rely upon the kindness of volunteers to deliver the 45-pound food package every other month.

Typical of the comments that come back to Polk County CSFP manager Velma Flisher is the call from a new recipient who was especially thankful for fruit juice she received. Even though the woman lived only four blocks from the supermarket, she was unable to carry heavy cans of juice up three flights of stairs to her apartment.

The CSFP food package distributed to elderly clients is modified somewhat to meet their dietary needs. Volunteer Adelaide Carpenter interviews home-bound clients and determines what changes are needed in the basic food package.

The package includes canned fruits and vegetables; canned meat and poultry; evaporated milk, nonfat dry milk, and butter; several different types of fruit juices; egg mix; farina; corn meal; peanut butter or dry beans; and dehydrated potatoes or rice. Egg mix is eliminated if the client has a high cholesterol problem, for example, and nonfat dry milk is not given out to elderly clients with an intolerance to milk.

Maryann Juhl is in charge of the volunteer delivery program in Polk County. Volunteers not only serve the Des Moines metropolitan area, but also several small towns in the county, about 576 square miles in all.

Elderly participants must be age 60

or older and have income that is not more than 130 percent of federal poverty level. Juhl says living conditions for program recipients are generally very poor. "They live on fixed incomes, are usually in poor health, non-ambulatory, and live alone," she says.



This woman is one of the more than 2,700 Polk County residents who get food packages delivered to their homes.

Volunteers are visitors too

For many shut-ins, CSFP volunteers may be the only visitors they see in their homes. Many volunteers purposely extend their visits by spending time putting away groceries in cupboards. All are trained to recognize whether clients are in need of additional assistance. Clients who do are referred to other agencies that can extend care, medical benefits, or Social Security payments. They are given an emergency phone number that they can call if they have health problems or fall and injure themselves.

"We once got a call from a patient on home leave from the veteran's hospital," Flisher recalls. "He said he was sitting in his living room and the water was up to his ankles. A pipe had burst and the elderly gentleman didn't know what to do. We called the fire department and stayed on the line to keep him calm and let him know help was coming."

To eliminate the anxiety of opening their doors to strangers, clients are called in advance of each CSFP delivery. They are told who will be coming and the approximate time they will arrive. This also allows clients to plan their day accordingly.

Forty-eight different agencies participate in the volunteer delivery operation. Some group living sites make deliveries for their tenants after the Polk County delivery van drops off a bulk shipment at the apartment building or group home for the elderly. United Way, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, veterans' groups, and several church-affiliated volunteers aid in the effort to see that tons of food are delivered to shut-in recipients.

The Polk County CSFP operates out of a commercial warehouse that doubles as a certification center and distribution site. In January 1989, the site will be moved to a former supermarket across from a Des Moines senior citizen center. Adjacent to the center will be a health clinic to serve both the elderly and expectant mothers.

The CSFP distribution site will be converted to a supermarket concept where recipients "shop" for their food packages. The self-service approach will allow able-bodied clients to assemble their own packages from a prescribed list of food items available from CSFP. Once they've filled their order, they will check out through a register that records items in their package.

Putting emphasis on nutrition

Polk County Extension Service has been an active participant in the nutrition education phase of CSFP. They routinely provide brochures for delivery with food packages and conduct information sessions at group homes on good nutrition practices.

Videotapes developed by FOCUS Hope, which runs the elderly feeding program in Detroit, will be shown to clients who come to the distribution site to pick up their food package. With failing health an everyday reality, proper diet is an essential factor in maintaining resistance to illnesses and providing the right nutrients every day.

For Polk County staff and volunteers alike, the CSFP effort has a special place in their hearts. Some inexperienced volunteers come away from their deliveries shaken by the isolation and the barrenness of their clients' existence.

Since the client population is made up of elderly people, a number die each month. That sadness aside, Velma Flisher sums up what most people affiliated with CSFP in Polk County feel: "It's the most rewarding program I've ever worked with in my life," she says.

Elderly citizens whose lives have been touched by volunteers bearing cartons of vital food are thankful, in turn, for the generous and thoughtful acts of citizens who donate their time to the program. Little wonder that Polk County CSFP officials have not been hard pressed to maintain their large cadre of caring volunteers for the past 6 years.

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article by Craig Forman



Velma Flisher (below), director of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for Polk County, has been the driving

force behind the volunteer delivery program. More than 200 volunteers help with the effort.

The Lesson For Today: Caring

Caring is part of the curriculum in two Omaha, Nebraska, high schools. While other classmates are playing sandlot ball or taking in a Saturday matinee, as many as 25 student volunteers may be passing out USDA commodities to between 5,000 and 6,000 elderly and low-income clients.

Meg Jones, coordinator of the student community services program in Omaha's Millard School District, says students participating in the volunteer effort receive a "very good learning experience." As part of their civics or child development classes at Millard North and Millard South high schools, students receive academic credit for volunteering.

They get one credit hour for each

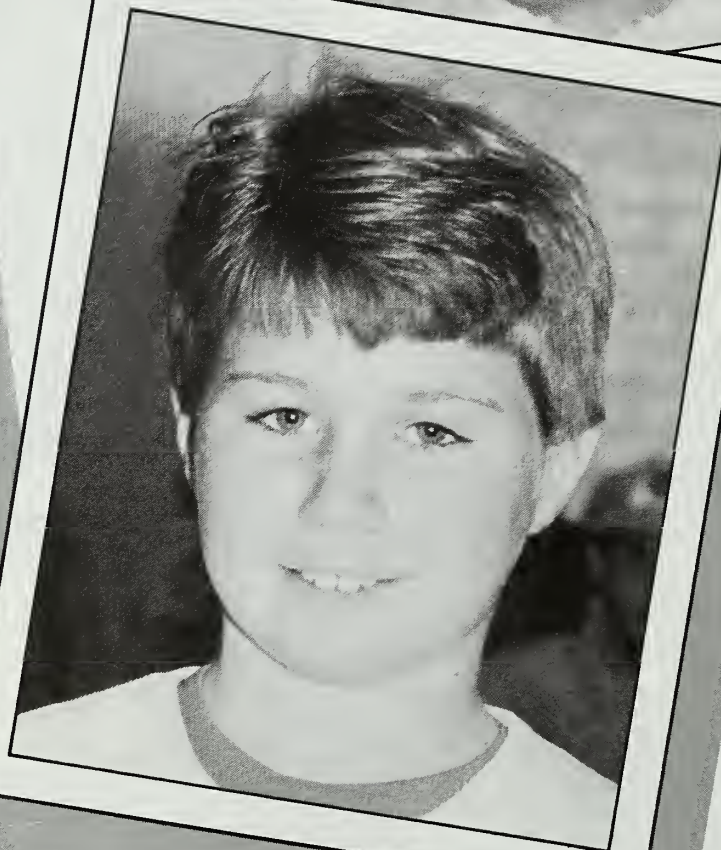
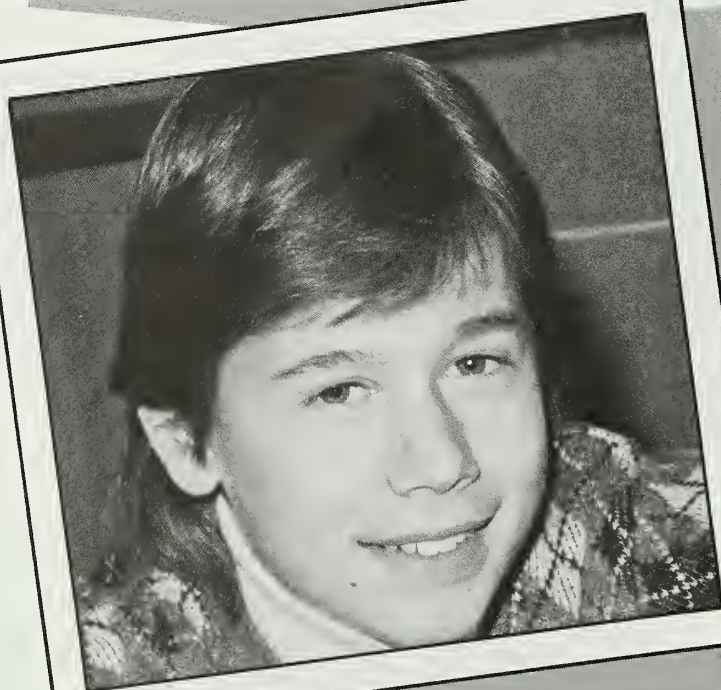
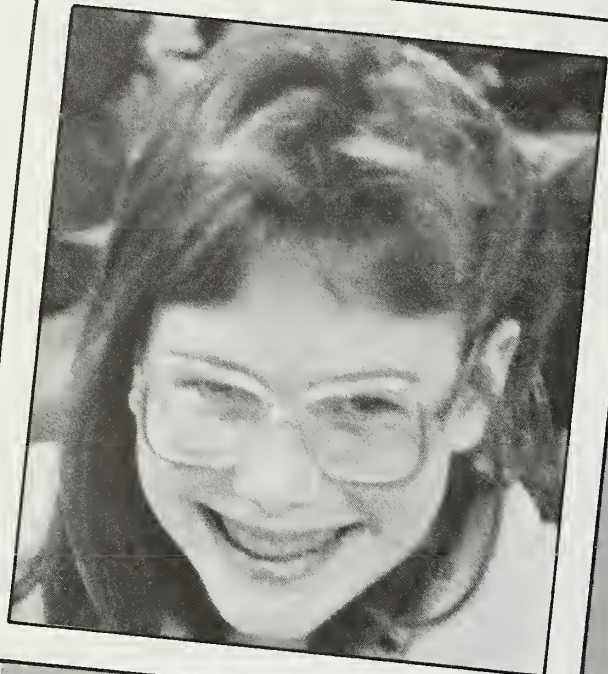


hour of weekly service per semester, up to a maximum of five credits. They are required to contribute at least 10 hours of volunteer work per semester as part of the course. However, many go far beyond that requirement once they have a taste of volunteering.

Agencies benefit from volunteer help

The program has been a part of the Millard School District curriculum for 7 or 8 years. Jones is certified in volunteer administration and was trained at the University of Colorado's Boulder campus. She has been the program's coordinator since January 1987. She says the program offers high school students an opportunity to exert a posi-





tive influence in the community.

Many nonprofit agencies benefit from the assistance. The Nebraska Social Service Department relies on student help for the Food and Nutrition Service's Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, and for the extended child care program in Omaha, which takes advantage of FNS' Child Care Food Program. In addition, some students act as unpaid aides at 10 extended child care—or "latch-key"—facilities, passing out snacks, playing with younger kids, and even tutoring older children.

The students also help with the annual Social Services foster family picnic, and visit the elderly in local

nursing homes. One student was honored last year as Nebraska's "Teen Volunteer of the Year" for developing a ballroom dancing program at a nursing center. Others work through United Way agencies or their churches. Some organizations draw on the student program for one-time events such as bike-a-thons or cleanup projects, while others use students regularly.

Teacher support boosts program

Jones credits the enthusiasm of local teachers for part of the program's success. She says long-term benefits include some new ideas for students on careers in social services or early

childhood education.

An April editorial in the Omaha World Herald lauded administrators, teachers, and students for their contributions.

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article by Joanne Widner

Bank Project Offers Long-Term Dividends

If you think bankers are only concerned about the welfare of their depositors, you haven't met the directors or employees of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Cherokee County, Alabama.

This rural bank believes in improving the lives of those who are on public assistance. It's a philosophy—backed up with money, personnel, and other resources—that is endorsed by everyone from the chairman of the board to the maintenance staff.

The bank's most recent project is a countywide program on home canning.

The project, called Can Hunger in Cherokee (CHIC), is aimed at participants in USDA's Food Stamp Program and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). However, any county resident can sign up for training.

"Our chairman of the board, Gene Rutledge, strongly believes that we need to develop projects that will offer long-term dividends to our neediest citizens," says Sandra Sentell, a member of the bank's board of directors. "People need more than a handout. They need opportunities to do something to

help themselves. If we can do that, then we've made an important contribution to this community."

Taking on projects to benefit the county's less fortunate isn't anything new to the Farmers and Merchants Bank. In the last few years, it has made cash contributions to match or double the value of contributions collected by the local Optimist Club during the club's annual fund drive.

The bank bought furniture, lamps, and toys for the family visiting room at the Cherokee County Department of Human Resources. It also purchased a video cassette recorder to be used in



Sharon Kilgore (left), "Can Hunger" coordinator for Farmers and Merchants Bank, gets a lesson on canning equipment from assistant county agent Linda Glass.

Fall 1988

the food stamp office for running videotapes on nutrition and on how to fill out food stamp applications.

County surprised by offer to help

"When the bank called and asked us to join in the food canning project, we were floored," says Al Manzella, director of Cherokee County Department of Human Resources (DHR). "We had never had a private business, let alone a bank, call and ask us to help them implement a project aimed at our welfare clients."

Having an idea is one thing; making it work is another. What seemed like a relatively simple concept proved to be more complicated than expected. For one thing, only about a dozen of the 50 to 60 individuals who showed up at the organizational meeting as potential volunteer instructors were willing to put in the necessary time.

"Many of those attending the meeting seemed to feel that providing training was a waste of time because low-income people don't want to learn to begin with or they wouldn't be in the situation they're in," Manzella says.

"The fact is that, many times, the only difference between a food stamp worker and a food stamp recipient is luck."

The next hurdle occurred when the CHIC project's organizers learned that all volunteer instructors would have to take a 30-hour course in food preservation before they could even begin teaching food canning to others.

However, 11 dedicated people agreed to take the course, which was conducted by county and state offices of the Alabama Extension Service. Each of the 11 also agreed to donate at least 20 hours instructing low-income residents on canning techniques.

The Farmers and Merchants Bank supported the volunteers' efforts by providing a kitchen and work area to conduct both instructor and client training; by buying pressure canners used for training and later lent to low-income individuals who took the training; by supplying the jars, lids, and vegetables used in the canning sessions; and by preparing advertisements promoting the food canning sessions.

In addition, the bank printed cards on the canning sessions that were mailed

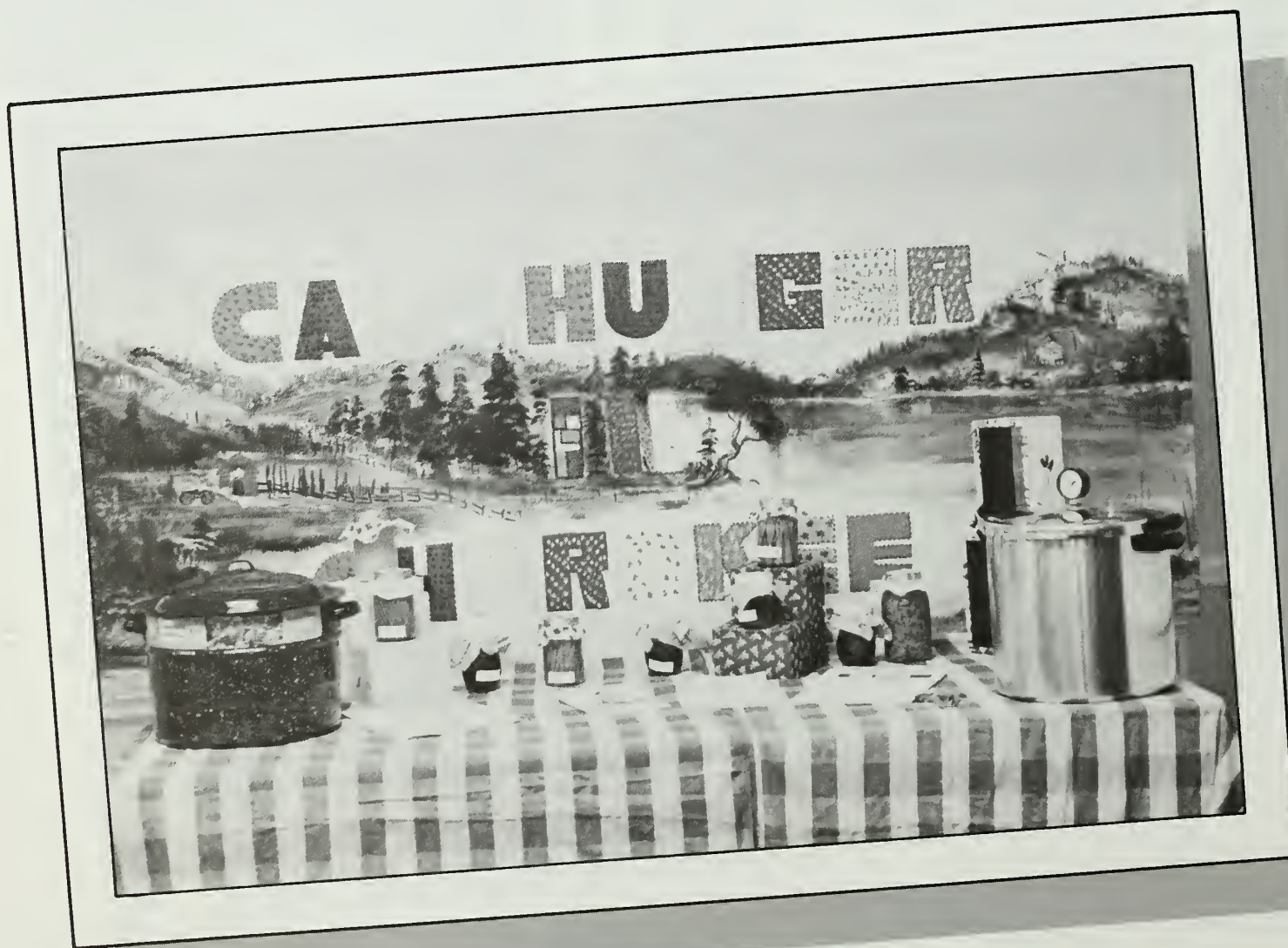
to all participants in USDA's food stamp and WIC programs. It also helped low-income individuals who took the course locate free or low-priced produce for canning.

Volunteers helped push participation

The next step was to get county residents, particularly those receiving public assistance, to attend CHIC training sessions. "We were blessed with the experience and community standing of our volunteers," said Sharon Kilgore, the bank's project coordinator.

One of those volunteers was Geneva James, a retired home economics teacher who had contact, directly or indirectly, with nearly every family in Cherokee County. She explains her success in getting volunteers and low-income families to participate in the project this way: "I'm a professional beggar. Whenever I believe in something, I fight to make it work. If one approach doesn't get the job done, another will."

Nearly 70 people from all economic levels participated in the canning sessions. According to Manzella, almost



10 percent of Cherokee County families receiving USDA food stamps took part. The course was basic but thorough, with each session limited to eight individuals and conducted by two volunteer instructors.

Once they completed the training, participants were allowed to keep the food they canned during the course. If the participant was on food stamps, the bank donated an additional case of canning jars, lids, and a supply of vegetables.

"We felt that training in food preservation would offer several benefits to food stamp clients," says Kilgore. "It would improve their nutrition, help them become more self-sufficient, and improve their self-image.

"In addition, by offering training to anyone interested in food preservation, a marvelous opportunity existed for social interaction by individuals from different economic levels. Some learned that education or the vagaries of fate frequently are the only things that differentiate them from their less or more fortunate neighbors."

Kilgore says the bank's goal is to add a program a year to what they are doing. This year, the self-help project added food drying procedures to the food preservation courses. In addition, the courses were offered at community facilities throughout the county, and instruction also was provided on putting in a fall garden.

Canned foods help make a difference

Statistically, CHIC has been a success, and Cherokee County has received a lot of favorable press for embarking on such an ambitious project. But has its targeted audience—low-income residents—benefited? Apparently so, if Quinelle Higgins is any example.

Higgins, who is in her 60's, recently moved back to Cherokee County after living in the Northeast for several years.

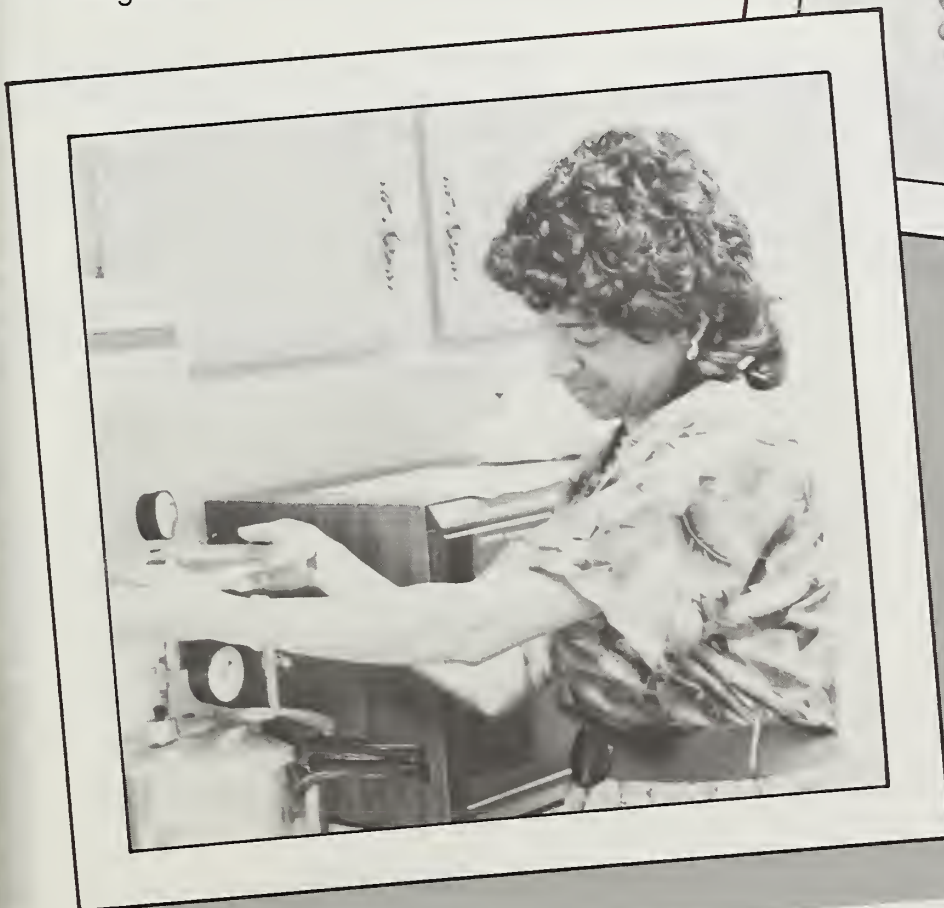
"Two of my grandchildren live with me," she says, "and I have to budget carefully to make ends meet. It had been years since I'd canned anything because vegetables aren't as readily available in the Northeast as they are here. I signed up for the canning session as a refresher course, but I ended up learning a lot of new things.

"We're still eating things I canned last year," Higgins says. "Why, I must have put up 100 jars of food. I canned pickled peaches, sliced peaches, string beans, cucumber pickles, hot peppers, and tomatoes. It was wonderful of the bank to let us borrow the pressure canners.

"You know, food stamps make a big difference in what I can spend on food, but they don't meet all my needs," Higgins adds. "The food I put up last year helped make the difference between my food stamps and the food my family needs."

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*article and photos
by Connie Crunkleton*



Linda Glass (left) was one of the leaders of the "Can Hunger in Cherokee" project. Here she demonstrates using a pressure canner gauge. Quinelle Higgins (above), a food stamp participant, displays some of the food she canned through the project.

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